

CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) is intended to inform the City of Carlsbad, public and quasi-public agencies and groups, and the general public about the potential significant environmental effects of the proposed project and associated actions (Section 15002 of the CEQA Guidelines).

The proposed project consists of the development and operation of a mixed-use center containing commercial retail, offices, single-family residential, multifamily residential, and open space areas collectively referred to as the La Costa Town Square project. The project proposes to subdivide an approximately 83-acre property into four parcels including a commercial parcel, an office parcel, a residential parcel, and a multifamily residential parcel. The project also proposes landscaping and utilities, and two detention basins that will control stormwater runoff from the project site. Approximately 9.1 acres of the site are proposed to be reserved for open space.

Discretionary approvals associated with the proposed project include amendments to the City's General Plan, the La Costa Master Plan, and the Local Facilities Management Plan Zone 11. The project also includes a Master Tentative Parcel Map, Commercial Tentative Tract Map, Residential Tentative Tract Map, Site Development Plan, Conditional Use Permits, Grading/Hillside Development Permit, participation in the implementation of the *Habitat Conservation Plan/Ongoing Multi-Species Plan (HCP/OMSP) for Properties in the Southeast Quadrant of the City of Carlsbad California* (City of Carlsbad 1995a), and certification of the Final EIR. Additionally, discretionary actions and/or approvals by other agencies include a Federal Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE); and a California Fish and Game Section 1602 and Section 401 Certification by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

1.1 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with the current guidelines for the preparation of EIRs issued by the City of Carlsbad and complies with all criteria, standards, and procedures of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources

Code Section 21000 et seq.); and the Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines) published by the Resources Agency of the State of California (California Administrative Code Sections 15000 et seq.) (CEQA 2008).

The City of Carlsbad is the lead agency for the preparation of this Draft EIR as defined by CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21067 as amended), and the content of the document reflects the independent judgment of the City.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR is intended to provide information to the public agencies, general public, and decision makers regarding the project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts from the development and operation of the proposed project and related components. Under the provisions of CEQA, “the purpose of an environmental impact report is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided” (Public Resources Code 21002.1(a)). This is a project EIR in accordance with Section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines.

1.3 BACKGROUND

To define the scope of the investigation of the Draft EIR, the City of Carlsbad originally distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to city, county, and state agencies; other public agencies; and other interested private organizations and individuals in April 2003. Upon making updates to the project description for the proposed project, the City recirculated the NOP in April 2005 and again on June 29, 2007. These updates reflected land use changes to project characteristics on the same project area proposed in 2003; notably, the project originally proposed office and childcare use but no multifamily residential units, whereas in 2007 the amount of proposed commercial space was increased, 14 affordable units were proposed for the commercial parcel, approximately 128 multifamily residences were proposed for the northwest parcel, and 64 single-family residences were included on the northeast parcel. A further land use modification was proposed in 2008 to refine the commercial space to include two office buildings on La Costa Avenue and delete the proposed theater and 14 affordable units. These changes were made in response to revised, economically driven needs for the project vicinity. Site design changes between 2003 and

2008 for the commercial parcel reflected these land uses changes, and the proposed changes did not change anticipated environmental impacts identified in the previous initial studies. The purpose of the NOP is to identify agency and public concerns regarding potential impacts of the proposed project.

In response to the 2003 and 2005 NOP, comment letters were received for both NOP documents from the following public agencies and private organizations: the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), State of California Department of Transportation District 11, San Diego County Archaeological Society, and Leucadia Wastewater District. In addition, comment letters were received from individuals Joy Lane and Alan Reece in response to the 2003 NOP.

Comment letters were received in response to the June 2007 NOP from the following public agencies, private organizations, and individuals: OPR, Native American Heritage Commission, North County Transit District (NCTD), SANDAG, City of Encinitas, San Diego County Archaeological Society, Francine J. Lane, Ernie Trujillo, Mr. and Mrs. P. Remington, Neal Meyers, Mehdi Zomorrodian, and Don Burton. Written comments received during the 30-day public review period for each NOP are included in Appendix A of this EIR.

Additionally, a public scoping meeting was held by the City on May 1, 2003. The purpose of this meeting was to convey information about the proposed project and to receive comments regarding the scope and content of the previous Draft EIR. Numerous public comments were made regarding the project's traffic and aesthetics impacts. As only minor changes were incorporated since this meeting, no public scoping session was held since the release of the 2003 NOP.

1.4 AVAILABILITY OF REPORTS

This Draft EIR and all reference documents are available for public review at the City of Carlsbad Planning Department, 1635 Faraday Avenue, Carlsbad, California 92008. Copies are available to the public upon payment of a charge for reproduction. Circulating copies are also available at the Carlsbad Georgina Cole Library and the City of Carlsbad City Library, Dove Lane (La Costa Library). Documents may be reviewed during regular business hours.

1.5 COMMENTS REQUESTED

Comments of all agencies and individuals are invited regarding the information contained in this Draft EIR. All comments on the Draft EIR should be sent to the following City of Carlsbad contact:

Mr. Van Lynch, Senior Planner
City of Carlsbad Planning Department
1635 Faraday Avenue
Carlsbad, California 92008-7314

Following a 45-day period of circulation and review of the Draft EIR, all comments and the responses to the comments will be incorporated in a Final EIR prior to certification of the document by the City of Carlsbad.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THIS EIR

This Draft EIR is organized into nine sections. Section 1.0 is this Introduction. Section 2.0, the Executive Summary, provides a brief project description, summarizes project impacts and mitigation measures, and identifies project alternatives. A detailed description of the proposed project is provided in Section 3.0. Section 4.0 describes the general environmental setting. Section 5.0 analyzes project impacts and identifies mitigation measures designed to reduce significant impacts. Section 6.0 discusses the cumulative impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, unavoidable significant environmental impacts, and areas of no significant impact. An analysis of alternatives to the proposed project is provided in Section 7.0. References and persons responsible for preparation of the EIR are included in Section 8.0. The Final EIR will also include Section 9.0, which will contain responses to comments on the Draft EIR.

A separately bound set of appendices to the Draft EIR includes the NOP and comments received on the NOP, as well as the technical studies prepared for the project. In compliance with Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program will be prepared as a separately bound document and will be adopted by the City at the time of certification of the EIR.